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The idea of the political, reconfiguring sovereignty and exception: Analysing theoretical perspectives of Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben.

Meenakshi Gogoi*

Abstract

The idea of 'political' is the most controversial term in the contemporary social science discourse and it remains vaguely understood. The 'political' is the fundamental authoritative domain pertaining to the state which ropes into it one of the basic concepts of politics i.e- sovereignty. The interconnectedness between 'political' and sovereignty is challenged with the emergence of liberal democracy. The idea of 'political' in the theoretical perspective of Carl Schmitt is related to the notion of sovereignty which is in contrary to the conventional understanding of sovereignty. His idea of sovereignty is specifically related to an exception. Giorgio Agamben's theory of 'state of exception' is inspired from Carl Schmitt's idea of sovereignty and its relation to exception though it re-interpreted exception as a permanent rule. This paper attempts to analyse Carl Schmitt's and Agamben's theories through this interesting tripartite relation among the political, sovereignty and exception which gives an interesting account to reconfigure sovereignty and its effects felt on Indian emergency of 1975-77 and anti-terror laws in recent times. Also in what ways it appears as a challenge to the centrality of law in a democracy.

Keywords: Political, Sovereignty, Exception, Democracy, Rule of Law.